

Press Release

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GAMING COMMISSION'S REVISES PROCEDURES FOR VARIANCE REQUESTS TO CONSERVE STATE RESOURCES

JEFFERSON CITY, Missouri - The Missouri Gaming Commission has revised its procedures for considering casino's requests for rule variances in an effort to conserve state resources as part of its *Managing for Results* initiative. In order to protect the integrity of legalized gambling in Missouri, the Gaming Commission has an extensive system of rules that meticulously govern the operation of every aspect of the state's casinos. However, because of unique aspects of each casino's hardware, software, physical layout, accounting procedures and many other factors, casinos frequently find it necessary to request a variance from one of the Gaming Commission's written procedural standards.

Under the old system, casinos would submit a letter requesting a variance explaining the rationale for it. However, the licensee making the request would often fail to research and cite the applicable statutes and regulations and would often neglect to include detailed procedures that would satisfy the underlying purpose of the Commission's rule. Staff would then have to identify and research the applicable laws and

regulations, and come up conditions or safeguards that might be prudent. This took a lot of staff time and effort.

The new procedure requires casinos to submit a form listing all rules and laws applicable to the variance request, thus doing the research themselves. The licensees are also required to justify why the variance is needed and suggest conditions or safeguards to preserve the underlying intent of the rule. The form also facilitates data entry into the Commission's newly created Variance Database, which was created to track all variances. Access is available to all Gaming Commission personnel so they can use the database to find similar variances the Commission has considered in the past. In addition, it allows auditors to determine before an audit, which rules might have a variance, thus saving them a lot of time erroneously citing suspected violations and tracking down related paperwork.

The result is a more efficient system that allows licensees to easily document variance requests and get much faster response time from the Gaming Commission. It also creates a historical record that provides easy access to procedures for casinos throughout the state, which helps ensure consistent application of laws and regulations. "This system is a good example of a tool that helps both private industry and government regulators achieve their goals," comments Gaming Commission Executive Director, Kevin Mullally. "It shows how the responsibilities in the regulatory process can be distributed to improve efficiency and accountability, meeting the goals of both the public and the regulated industry."

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